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In her review of *Shelter Blues: Sanity and Selfhood Among the Homeless (1997)*, Sue Estroff compares the experience of reading Robert Desjarlais' polemic on the phenomenology, dialogics, and semiotics of shelter life to the discomforting sensation of "wandering in a daze through turgid prose, and slogging through soggy schema- not unlike the meanderings of the shelter residents one imagines" (1999:749). Estroff proceeds to question the "actual relevance and contribution of these approaches to the subject [the dynamics of shelter existence] at hand" (1999:749) by criticizing the author's affinity for certain terms, such as "poetics", "physics" and "geographies" in his deconstruction of the former Mission Street Shelter's mentally ill. In her opinion, the use of these "devices" "obscures the argument, the content and the people we are meant to know" (1999:749), thereby shrouding the important essences and issues of the subjects and circumstances being studied.

Ironically however, the very themes of "poetics", "physics" and "geographies" play an important role in forging Desjarlais' unique perspective, and also facilitate his thoughtful explication of the intimacies of homelessness and the idiosyncratic features associated with living in an urban shelter. Despite Estroff's accurate observation of the high degree of emphasis placed on the shelter itself which "looms quite large in the foreground of Desjarlais' ethnographic frame" (1999:749), she overlooks the fact that it is the actual spatial organization and architectural structure of the shelter and the State Center Government building within which it is encapsulated that serves as the highly visual vehicle of representation employed by the author to illustrate the interconnectedness and dynamic interactions existing between the concepts of identity and sanity, and the shaping forces of politics and "culture". The building structure also stands as a visual "interpretant" linking theoretical postulations with social phenomena identified in the practice of participant observation. From this perspective, the State Center megastucture may be envisioned as a tangible cultural artifact that is employed as a visual metaphor to both elucidate and substantiate the political and culturally-derived forces molding traditional views of homelessness, mental illness and sanity. Using architectonic images as a medium, Desjarlais succeeds in translating the abstract themes of "poetics" into a probing analysis of the myth and phenomenological-inspired stereotype of the homeless mentally ill, "physics" into a political deconstruction of homelessness, and "geographies" into a sensitive interpretation of the construction of sanity, identity and self through an analysis of the semiotics of space. By employing architectural landscape as a kind of surreal theatrical setting, the author is able to form a multi-layered and multi-hued background against which the characters, social dynamics and political

exchanges bartered within the shelter "community" are situated, "reframed", and ultimately, contextualized in the process of unveiling their deeper signification and meaning.

This critique proposes to illustrate the diverse ways in which Robert Desjarlais employs the unique architectural features and history of the Boston State Center building that houses the former Mission Street Shelter to both describe the social organization of the center's structure, and capture the sense and sensibilities of the resident itinerants comprising the shelter community. Three themes that will be explored include: 1) The use of architectural form to contextualize public notions of madness and the propensities of "myth-making" in the "aesthetization of poverty"; 2) The emphasis on structure as a symbol of political power and policy; and 3) The construction of selfhood and identity as influenced by and expressive of interactions within particular domains, in a semiotic reading of space.

A Blueprint for Madness: A "poetics" of homelessness

From word to image, Desjarlais paints a thought-provoking portrait of the swelling, fortress-like concrete masses that mold the imposing government megastructure by using language that is as skillfully textured and fashioned as colour dabbed onto an artist's canvas. Each phrase and sentence alluding to the esoteric architectural form of the building is formulated to evoke disquieting images of complex, isolated units, labyrinthine details of spatial intricacy, and hollow, haunting waste spaces. Stairways conjure visions of "melting, flowing, erring" (Desjarlais 1997:52) or more dramatically, instill a sense of silent desperation particularly in descriptions of those that terminate in mid-air and stand as forgotten testaments to the incomplete reality of the unfinished megastructure.

One adjective that dominates Desjarlais' palette of words is the term "brutal", which is used as a linguistic cue to situate austere architectural manifestations, such as the building's violence-evoking corduroy walls within the aesthetic doctrines of the particular school of thought and stylistic conventions to which the building's morphology adheres. The pursuit of artistic contextualization of form and function leads the author to elaborate on the artistic ideologies of the architect of the State Center Complex, Paul Rudolph, and his application of late-Modernist techniques that contribute to the building's "angular irregularities" and often unsettling atmosphere of contained chaos. The uncompromising form of *Brutalist architecture* which expresses itself in a large scale using raw, exposed materials, emphasizing stark forms and weighty, textured surfaces of thickly patterned concrete is used as a graphic metaphor which acts as a visual bridge illustrating the linkages between political maneuvers, cultural symbolism, and the phenomenological-induced images that frame public perceptions of the homeless.

The chosen title for one of the book's chapters, "A Crazy Place For Crazy People" signals the author's concern over the disturbing correlation between structural form and the inner workings of the human mind. The tradition of associating the unconventional design of the State Center complex with the psycho-pathological mental state of indwelling shelter residents is explicitly revealed through textual and graphic devices. Commentaries addressing narratives woven by public information media which incorporate actual examples of parallelisms drawn between structural

and psychological madness, as expressed in a Boston newspaper article that correlates the building's architectural schema as "the seven circles of madness" with "the animal madness of one of the building's residents" (Desjarlais 1997:50) are included by Desjarlais to illustrate the predominance of the symbolic interconnectedness between architectural form and the "flesh world" realities of the underprivileged, and the "insane" in contemporary Western Culture. The technique of reverting to media blurbs and "sympathy-evoking" human interest stories that detail various aspects, episodes and circumstances of the homeless condition, is employed in engaging several perspectives and modes of interpretations of such social phenomena- from the phenomenological and the mythical to the mundane. This unique application of epistemological and methodological inquiry help to forge Desjarlais' thesis of the current myopic perceptions of homelessness in the urban setting, while simultaneously promoting a more culturally-specific understanding of the homeless mentally ill within the framework of their own realities, experiences and reflexive reflections, in their own right and on their own terms.

Extrapolations on themes which Estroff would define as transgressions into the realm of "poetics" are encountered in Desjarlais' investigation of the origin and perpetuation of the "myth-making" imagery of the homeless archetype, that is a representational amalgam of "grotesque bodies, unnamed figures, animal behaviours, incomprehensible utterances, and deathly underworlds" (Desjarlais 1997:3). In an attempt to comprehend what the author terms "a poetics of homelessness", which embodies the perceived qualities of "animality", death and darkness that contribute to the stigmatization of the displaced of society, Desjarlais turns to exegeses founded on the metaphysics of the "sublime".

Through an innovative interpretive maneuver, Desjarlais elicits the logic of metaphysical theories of the sublime to situate and explicate the dynamic psychological forces believed to inform the conceptualization of "homelessness" in Western society. The choice of this avenue of inquiry extends from the author's hypothesis that "the ways in which people respond to and present what they take to be sublime can help to explain how many commonly respond to and present what they take to be the homeless" (Desjarlais 1997:65). There are three "movements" to Desjarlais' symphonic synthesis of the sublime paradigm. These include Kant's interpretation of the "mathematical sublime", Burke and Weiskels' elaboration of the "poetic sublime", and the contextualization of these elements within an analogue of the homeless as "beautiful ruins". In each case, the author employs specific examples which highlight various aspects of the metaphysical phenomenon of the sublime as they occur and are deciphered within the tangible architectural framework of the Government Center building. This method of analysis conforms to the author's general theme of linking knowledge derived from phenomenological theories and "experience" related to the geography of space and social exchange to construct an anthropologically-informed narrative of identity, agency, and selfhood as they are forged by various dimensions of one's physical environment.

Desjarlais borrows Kant's model of the "mathematical sublime" which describes the pleasurable sensation that is derived from an individual's "painful awareness of the power of Reason to go

beyond sensory impressions" (Desjarlais 1997:61). The failure of the powers of the imagination to conceptualize an object or essence in its totality is used to interpret the psychological confusion that arises in response to an encounter with an entity which lacks form (Desjarlais 1997:61). The reality of this abstract, psychological sensation is made more comprehensible by paralleling the stimulus of the sensory phenomenon to the essence of "boundlessness" dominating the architectural form of the government edifice. The overwhelming elements of giganticism, waste spaces and the perceptual disorientation which results from the "missing" central tower are cited as the main factors contributing to the aura of "boundlessness" that inhibit the viewer from comprehending the structure as a whole, through perceptual means. The condition of perceptual overload is linguistically represented by the phrase "feeling too much", which is used to further illustrate the interconnection between phenomenological theories and the conceptualization of homelessness via repeated allusions to architectural paradigms. The phrase "feeling too much" is taken from Rudolph's commentary on perceptual concerns arising from an imbalance in the dynamics of architectural space in which he articulates the importance of constructing a central tower for the complex to stand as a index of perspective and orientation for those inside (as well as outside) the building. As Rudolph explains:

> The balancing of thrusting and counter thrusting spaces often rushing the blue, outward and upward, leads to the most dynamic of all interior spaces. However, if this thrusting of space is not brought into equilibrium, it causes most people to immediately feel a sense of disorientation and unease. They are actively repelled by the space, because it is felt too much (Desjarlais 1997:51).

A Kantian interpretation of the "experiencing of space" as articulated by the concept of the "mathematical sublime" is augmented by Weiskel's rendition of the more esoteric, and linguistically-founded "poetic sublime" which occurs in the discursive moment "when a word or image contains so much that there is nothing we cannot read into it" (Desjarlais 1997:62). Drawing on additional reflections from Burke and his unique interpretation of the sublime as the manifestation of confusion spurred by information overload, Desjarlais harnesses the insight of both "thought" and "feeling" as he melds the pedagogy of theory and the revelations gathered from mundane experience to unravel the logic behind the mythology, imagery, and metaphorical tropes inherited by the "untouchable" and "unspeakable" caste of homeless society. As per Desjarlais' method of ethnographic documentation, philosophical postulations related to abstract concepts, such as the "sublime" that are used as modes of interpretation of homelessness are made more coherent, convincing and "tangible" by identifying and describing evidence of such phenomena in the everyday experiences and reflections of shelter residents. A conceptual leap from the confines of phenomenological theory to the vivid reality of sense perception is enacted when, for example, a particular essence or variation of the "sublime" is revealed as a "real" sensation evoked in residents reflecting on their reactions to certain areas of the State Center building. The feeling of imminent danger, induced by flights of stairs obscuring natural light, and the melancholic trappings of space that give the impression of descending into a cave or underworld are descriptions

of the ground floor entrance included by Desjarlais that closely adhere to the foreboding, nature-inspired sensation of Burke's conceptualization of the "sublime". Personal accounts of the type of disillusionment delineated by Weiskel's model of the "poetic sublime" and in particular, the theme of "crowdedness" is reflected in the vernacular expressions of residents such as Richard, who lament over the fact that there is "too much to look at" in the building- a structural reality attributed with evoking a sense of restlessness and variable degrees of "violence of the imagination" in residents (Desjarlais 1997:62). The practice of interweaving resident testimonials into the body of his ethnographic work serves to authenticate the method of formulating interpretations of social phenomena, such as perceptions of homelessness which he bases on far-reaching, and seemingly irrelevant and incongruent philosophical schemata.

Desjarlais also draws on Weiskel's theory of the "poetic sublime" and specifically the element of "mental blockage" that arises from a proliferation of words and meanings. Special attention is focused on the prescribed antidote for this state of mental confusion, which entails "freeing" the movements of imagination by replacing strong images with less "overwhelming" or less threatening meanings. It is in fact the essence of Weiskel's postulation of the "poetic sublime" that informs and facilitates the author's explication of the enigmatic factors contributing to the formation of the homeless archetype. The all-encompassing sensation of "feeling too much" culminates in the collision of philosophical dogmas, architectural paradigms, semantic overload, and aesthetic principles in the mundane and corporeal experiences of urban encounters. As summarized by the author:

> The homeless can be felt too much. Those living on the streets and in the shelters are disturbing because they threaten assumed paradigms of meaning. Their presence can effect an excess of meaning for which the American imagination has yet to account. To escape a sense of blockage, those confronted by the homeless resort to irony, mythic themes, and a rough poetry to give meaning to their encounters (1997:65).

The rationale and conventions associated with "presenting the unpresentable", or what Desjarlais calls "framing the homeless" is further investigated by analyzing the *aesthetization* of poverty. In his attempt to interpret the delimiting or framing of the homeless, Desjarlais' adopts a Derridian perspective on the capacity of the *parrergon* ("frame") to delimit a hypothetical *ergon* of the "sublime" in artistic representation in a way that is both dramatic and telling. In the context of discourse grounded in art criticism, the similitude between representations of the sublime in the artistic realm, and media images of homelessness is revealed. Just as the "sublime" transgresses borders of artistic representation, the homeless step over the boundaries of culturally-constructed norms of appearance, act, speech, and "experience". The ethic of the aesthetic is applied to the conceptualization of the homeless, just as a picture frame gives an ornamental aura to the *ergon* it is meant to crop and display and the Kantian "sublime" is necessarily imbued with beauty lest it be viewed as "wild, coarse and repulsive". In this vein, the characteristics of destitution, impurity, and darkness that threaten every

dimension of sight, sound, smell, touch and moral taste, are made more bearable and less threatening through their juxtaposition with their more acceptable binary opposites wherein "pain clashes with beauty", the wild is tamed by the civil, and where "the threat becomes fiction, a piece of art" (Desjarlais 1997:66).

Psychological, cognitive, architectural, and aesthetic yearnings for the delimitation of incomprehensible subjects and objects without form lead Desjarlais to describe the homeless as "beautiful ruins". Identifying the situatedness of interpretations of homelessness within an "architecture" - "a rhythm or structure that gives form and meaning to the formless" (Desjarlais 1997:66) is an example of yet another instance in which the vehicle of architecture as a form of visual representation is used to promote a more coherent, comprehensible conceptualization of homeless archetypal forms. By shedding light on Rudolph's particular pursuit of an aesthetics of decay reflected in the wish that "his megastructure built on the 'slums of the West end' ends as beautiful ruins" (Desjarlais 1997:64), the author signals the existence of a further dimension to the ruins aesthetic, beyond the sublime satisfaction derived from standing in the midst of destruction or the process of heightening the level and coherence of meaning-making attained by bestowing form to formlessness. Rudolph's sentiments help bridge the gap between the domains of art and politics through the "politicization of art", which Desjarlais successfully utilizes as a conceptual gateway to further lines of evidence which illustrate the force of political agency in the construction of homeless identity, mental illness, community and everyday struggle for survival. Referring to those occupying the higher echelons of beaurocratic institutions as "the architects of Boston's homeless" (Desjarlais 1997:65), is a statement that is as political in its tone and insinuations as is the author's pursuit of tracing the origin of the aesthetization of architectural ruins to the "Ruins Principle" of the Third Reich which held that "architecture [must be] built to decay majestically, like the ruins of Athens" (Desjarlais 1997:64). Allusions to images of classical, "golden-age" architecture as in the author's juxtaposition of Apollonian and Dionysian structural forms in an analogy of urban landscape serve as linguistic cues that signal an ethos of yearning for the pre-existing structural and social order of the past. The contemporary obsession with myth, heroics, tragedy and idealized form, order and artistic representation responsible for the aesthetization of the homeless is thus indelibly tied to the modern architectural ethos of re-establishing hierarchical structures for the purposes of forging meaning from the incomprehensible and chaotic, grounding identity in the midst of transition, and in short "creat[ing] order out of the desperate confusion of our times" (Desjarlais 1997:68).

The haunting illusion of order of the government building and the mythic contrivances of modern architectural style are dismantled by Desjarlais' post-modernist critique. The topic of the premature structural decay of the State Center complex allows the author to compare the eroding nature of the edifice's physical structure to its equally decaying functionality. Quoting residents' views on the dehumanizing and outdated architectural utility and comfort of the building ultimately build the framework upon which Desjarlais constructs his discourse on the primary theme of the dysfunctional and equally dehumanizing

social organizational aspects of the existing social infrastructure which has failed to meet the individual needs of shelter residents. In this context, it is clear that Desjarlais' concentration on architecture throughout his ethnography has a greater purpose than providing an entertaining, aesthetic *parrergon* to his study. Apart from serving as a lucid background that contextualizes the environmental factors that influence the formation of identity and the tone and level of social interaction, the architectural form of the building and discourse engaging the theme of architecture in general serves a genuinely political function. Unlike media accounts that focus on what the building is [strictly in terms of appearance], Desjarlais attempts to trace where the ideological concept of the institution comes from, and the forces which attempt to translate a modernist ethic on the inhabitants residing within it. In short, the divergence of the architectural features of the building from the conventional, modern style's ethos of order, control, and authority, mirror the divergence of the shelter's organizational arrangements and goals from those of the Modern era during which the institution was conceived. Desjarlais bases much of his research on illustrating how the modernist ideals of the progress, rehabilitation and reintegration of the destitute into society which the overseers of the shelter program strive to achieve, have failed as a result of clinging to ideals of human development that have long since faded since the dawn of the post-industrial age.

Form, Function and Power: A "physics" of homelessness

The tone and theoretical underpinning of Desjarlais' arguments addressing the conscious and unconscious symbol content of architectural structure as a manifestation of political and cultural sensibilities parallels the philosophy of Charles Moore, who notes that

> A building itself has the power by having been built right or wrong or mute or noisy, to be what it wants to be, to say what it wants to say, which starts us looking at buildings for what it is they are saying rather than accepting their pure esoteric existence (1973: 243).

Recognition and acknowledgment of the potency and sense of power embodied within inanimate architectural structures which exists across intellectual, cultural, and economic boundaries is eloquently illustrated by Desjarlais in the chapter entitled "Disorientation and Obscurity" which discusses the political and ideological undertones to panoptic forms of surveillance. Inspired by an insightful, vernacular rendition of Bentham's idea of the "all seeing" tower articulated by a resident describing the repercussions which would ensue the erection of the State Center's central tower, Desjarlais focuses on the ways in which the building's features diverge from the principles of panoptic architecture. Whereas surveillance made possible by this form of structure requires open spaces, strictly demarcated architectural domains, and an unlimited source of light to make all "visible and known", the architecture of the State Center defies the architectural dogmas of the panopticon due to its expansive "formlessness", unbounded territories, and abundance of dark areas and hidden waste spaces. Only the shelter proper abides by the rules of the panopticon and it is not surprising that it is the only area of strict surveillance and monitoring, a fact which some strive

to challenge and others try to elude. The very structure of the building evokes Desjarlais' theorization of the acts of obscurity and displacement as the postmodern strategy of policing and solution to social problems that have replaced the ideals of the panopticon. The substitution of the panopticon schema which emphasizes open spaces, visibility and reformation (which Foucault identified as the architectural figure of the modern disciplinary age), for an architectural form defined by darkness, displacement and the act of obscurity is the manifestation of political and economic transformation. One characteristic which Desjarlais defines as differentiating the modern era from the post-industrial age is the ethos of humanity and the ideal of "human progress" that reigned in the former time period, which has been superseded in the present age by emphasis on resources, capital spending and the government budget as the "measure" or deciding factor of the creation, structure and organization of social policy and infrastructure devoted to human welfare. The incommensurability of values belonging to the present which "hold onto the vestiges of [this] tradition" (Desjarlais 1997:104) despite the eradication of the concept of humanitarianism are qualities illustrated by the very contradictory nature of the building itself. Although the surveillance orchestrated by staff organizing and supervising shelter life inhibits the freedom and violates the privacy of shelter residents, the inherent darkness, waste spaces and "chemical surveillance" (facilitated by the narcotizing effects of medication prescribed to residents to control some of the various symptoms of diverse mental illnesses), along with the labyrinthine architectural blueprint of the State Center negate the very principles of the panopticon and the ideals of the modern discipline era.

Marxism as a critical approach to the analysis of the homeless is applied to several issues throughout *Shelter Blues*. Declining productivity and the decreased "value" of supporting a large base of low income workers are cited as the causal factors responsible for the limited availability of low-income housing, declining employment opportunities, and the declining capacity for the re-integration of psychiatric patients into the existing political economy (Desjarlais 1997:104). The concept of "value" is used by the author to explain the politics of displacement and obscuring which have replaced modern, positivist views on the visibility, rehabilitation and productivity of those transgressing the coda of social norms and/or those living on the interstices of society. Desjarlais underscores how property is deemed as more valuable than people, with "high-value" landscapes policed and protected more fervently from vandalism and vagrants, whereas "low- value" property (which is less desirable) is less protected and thus serves as the temporary refuge of the disenfranchised. Desjarlais emphasizes this phenomenon by noting the actions of the Capitol Police policing the State Center building whose severity of chastisement and displacement of loitering residents and street people varies in accordance with the "value" of the geographical location at the time of trespass (Desjarlais 1997). A Marxist mechanics of meaning is also applied in explicating the visual manifestations of "bodily and social transgressions" that contribute to the negative stereotyping of the homeless mentally ill. "Sitting on the floor, defecating and urinating in public places, panhandling and talking to oneself" are all interpreted within the

context of political economy (Desjarlais 1997:3).

The utilization of the State Center as a vehicle representing symbols of power relations is especially relevant to Desjarlais' pursuit of constructing a theoretical framework that links the phenomenological to the political. The segregation of people based on social status and the maintenance of an explicit social order within the building are evidenced by various examples. A "social blueprint" of the center is sketched and enriched by the author's allusions to Dumezil's insights regarding Indo-European conceptualizations of social order as hierarchical strata of celestial, atmospheric, terrestrial, and subterranean denizens taxonomized on the basis of status, duties and character (Desjarlais 1997:72). Desjarlais draws correlations between the celestial and atmospheric characteristics of the beaurocrats and medical practitioners of the building, the terrestrial domain of shelter staff, and the subterranean, "savage-like" status of the homeless mentally ill, who have been symbolically relegated to the ground-floor, dungeon-like area of the shelter and its outlying areas (Desjarlais 1997:72).

The disorientation and subsequent intensification of the symptoms of mental illness evoked by the zigzag geometry and discombobulating atmosphere of the State Center building is even compared to similar politically-molded architecture employed by political regimes to confuse and terrorize a population. The manipulation of waste spaces by residents offers insight into political manipulation of space from the "bottom up". A worms-eye view of the politics of space dominating the structure offers images of residents taking advantage of architectural waste spaces that are used for deviant and not so deviant behavior, out of the watchful eye of shelter surveillance. The author's analysis of such actions reveals the "double-edged" nature of participating in such behaviour which on the one hand seems to secure some much need privacy for the homeless itinerants, while at the same time inhibiting the emergence of a stronger, more cohesive collectivist action for political change; thereby perpetuating society's practice of "obscuring" the destitute (Desjarlais 1997: 99).

Although Desjarlais spends a great deal of time pointing out the explicit, disorienting, architectural features which serve to dehumanize, obscure, and undermine the personhood of shelter residents; he also provides an implicit political commentary on the underlying, unspoken statement embodied by the State Center building. Just as architecture is said to take on a special meaning when it becomes a ruin in the same age as its construction, the special meaning conveyed by the incomplete nature of the building is made clear. Whether by reason of lack or mismanagement of funds, lack of initiative or lack of caring, the message signaled by the incomplete nature of the building hearkens back to the Marxist-informed theme of "value". The building remains in its present unfinished state because the space, the people and the concept of social support envisioned are of little value. Like the "gaping wound" of the parking lot originally meant to serve as the site of the nonexistent tower, the homeless adorn the cityscape like weeds, displaced and out of place in the bustling urban landscape.

Culture and Space: A "geography" of homelessness

The concept that "organized space" is both an embodiment of political policy and machinations, as well as a transmitter of cultural values is explored

extensively by Desjarlais in *Shelter Blues.*

A sensitive articulation of the diverse ways in which space and culture interact and affect one another is made manifest by the author's unique interpretations which are based on theoretically-framed and politically-ensconced readings of the distinct semiotic, rhetorical, physical and psychological phenomena enacted by shelter residents. The relevance of observing and analyzing variations of psychologically-induced behavior within the tapestry of shelter life is brought to the forefront by Desjarlais' explication of such ephemeral actions as
vivid markers that indicate the inherent interconnections between the intangible ethos of cultural ideals and the tangible physical landscape of the State Center building.

The thrust of Desjarlais' arguments emanate from the truism which holds that cultural values determine spatial organization, which in turn display cultural values (although not necessarily the organizing values) that are absorbed by its residents. In the ethos of architectural anthropology, the author meets the challenge of revealing the embeddedment of culturally-informed ideologies in space by applying a form of analysis similar to the tenets of the Settlement Theory Model (a form of processual analysis used in the interpretation of archaeological settlements). As per the standards of this mode of investigation, Desjarlais "breaks up" the space within and around the settlement (the main living spaces in the shelter community) into settings (areas that contain cultural actions) which can then be studied discretely and objectively, as a linguist might conduct a componential analysis of the features of a word to derive the essence of its meaning. Detailed descriptions of the basketball court composing the shelter proper, references to the fifth-floor psychiatric ward, and the more liminal living areas, including the concrete boundaries of the "sea of tranquility" and the obscuring waste spaces of Rudolph's subconscious design reflect Desjarlais attention to the organization of space. Because the occupants of a settlement system move through many types of settings, and absorb cultural information from each domain, of action and interaction, the interconnection of the settings are identified and defined, as are the limits of the "system" itself. In the process of defining these limits and boundaries of structured space, Desjarlais also identifies and describes the core areas of the settlement system in which people inhabit a particular community and where culture is learned and reproduced.

A conceptual framework borrowed from architectural analysis is the Physical Setting Approach devised by Steele (1973). Desjarlais adheres to Steele's method which focuses on the role that the dimensions of the physical setting play in organizational development. This approach articulates a philosophy which states that every physical setting can be viewed in terms of the relationship among and between the elements of a setting and the functions performed within that setting. Elements are those aspects that are likely to influence the functioning of individuals (or groups) (Steele 1973). Desjarlais' critical analysis of the "geographies" of the homeless conform to Steele's taxonomy of the dimensions of physical settings which include:

1) Symbolic identification which refers to the message sent by the setting that tells someone what a person, group or organization is like (Steele 1973). Desjarlais' analysis of the symbolism of Rudolph's architecture, media representations of homelessness and the

correlation drawn between structural unconventionality and the manifestations of mental illness are thoroughly probed by the author.

2) Social Contact represented in the arrangement of facilities and spaces to permit or promote social interaction (Steele 1973). A deconstruction of the major "living spaces" or domains of the building is conducted by Desjarlais. Each domain is characterized by the type of activity/interaction performed in that area and the level of surveillance or privacy that distinguishes that area. The shelter proper, with its institutional sleeping arrangement, is described as a highly routinized sphere of activity and interaction which is separated into resident and staff quarters or areas. The high level of surveillance and noise of the shelter area along with its rigid "enter" and "exit" times makes it the least comfortable area and an area of limited interaction. The lobby's open, "formless" area hums with the activity of a Gibraltar's market being the main area of social and economic exchange. It is a unique area because it occupies the liminal spaces of the shelter. As such, the lines between authority and freedom, residing and loitering are blurred. The "sea of tranquility" and the various waste spaces of the building are described as the areas which elude public surveillance and afford privacy and peace to those who wish to be alone. The aforementioned spaces fulfill the taxonomic category of pleasure as they are areas where residents gain gratification from some aspect of the setting. The actions of "pacing" or the pursuit of stasis are described as occurring in every domain, though vary in intensity and frequency depending on the person.

3) Security and Shelter refer to protection from harmful or unwanted stimuli (Steele 1973). The security of the shelter is frequently juxtaposed to the experiences of the street in Desjarlais' articulation of the Peirce's concepts of "firstness", "secondness" and "thirdness" of being.

4) Task instrumentality refers to the facilities and layout opportunities for carrying out tasks in a particular setting (Steele 1973). As chores are a daily routine of shelter life, the appropriate spaces and domains are available to the residents. An interesting domain which encourages the completion of tasks themselves is the "token store" which gives the residents an opportunity to cash tokens earned from completing chores for various items of necessity and pleasure.

5) Growth refers to structures which stimulate the psychological growth of the user (Steele 1973). Desjarlais' commentary on the "inging" actions performed by the shelter inhabitants as a result of boredom emphasizes the fact that the negative effects that accompany "shelterization" and bring on the "shelter blues" are due in part to the lack of structure or promotion of stimulating and productive activities.

In this critique of *Shelter Blues*, the criticisms of a reviewer (Sue Estroff) were used as a vehicle which provoked an investigation into the ways in which Robert Desjarlais is able to synthesize phenomenological and philosophical devices to describe and explain the "experiences" and conditions of the homeless mentally ill. Although Estroff's statement should not be taken as representative of the general tone of her review (as she praises certain aspects of the book), she does underestimate the importance and relevance of Desjarlais use of certain models and postulations in his attempt to interpret and comprehend his subjects and subject matter. One goal of this critique has been to describe the insightful ways in which Desjarlais has utilized phenomenological, political and artistic approaches in delineating the

"physics", "poetics" and "geographies" of homelessness. The second goal of this critique has been to explain how the author is able to draw on so many diverse sources of information while maintaining a coherent line of argument. The answer seems to lie in Desjarlais' use of architectural form as a vivid, visual representation or paradigm to convey complex, abstract and ambiguous concepts and modes of conceptualization. Artistic representation, notions of the sublime, Marxist theory and a semiotics of space are all made tangible, comprehensible and real through the author's use of the architectural features and historical background of the State Center building as the "the theatrical setting" of his analytical narration. In this context, Desjarlais is able to draw a character sketch of the homeless as they are framed, and convey his message in words and images that are coherent and familiar. In this fashion, he is able to demonstrate how the obscuring and displacement of the homeless is derived not so much from culturally-described mental disorders, but from the fact that the homeless do not follow the "culturally-accepted" *script* of social interaction. Their transgression of social "rules" ensures the exclusion of their presence from the "world stage", a forum constructed by and for those who "act" within the proper realms of "normality" and who conform to "accepted" forms of social behavior. The working metaphor of architecture also serves as a conversational piece that function as a social lubricant between ethnographer and subject. Most strikingly though, it exists as a highly visual illustration which accompanies the data gathered from the author's reading of settings, places, people and situations as texts. In an important way, Desjarlais' ethnography succeeds in the transition from textual explication to visual representation by putting the "graphic" back into ethnography. In so doing, he is successful in evoking all of one's senses and eliciting a more "embodied understanding" of human phenomena in all their shades of difference.

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